



LESSON 22

Judgment Day

“Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen, such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the Kingdom of God upon earth.”

JOHN WESLEY

Kirk’s Comment

A friend once asked me, “What’s Judgment Day?” If sinners are not aware of the Day in which they will give an account of their lives to God, they will not see a need to heed God’s command to repent: “[God] commands all men everywhere to repent: because he has appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness” (Acts 17:30,31).

QUESTIONS & OBJECTIONS

“Jesus didn’t condemn the woman caught in the act of adultery, but condemned those who judged her. Therefore you shouldn’t judge others.”

The Christian is not “judging others” but simply telling the world of God’s judgment—that God (not the Christian) has judged all the world as being guilty before Him (Romans 3:19,23). Jesus was able to offer that woman forgiveness for her sin, because He was on His way to die on the cross for her. She acknowledged Him as “Lord,” but He still told her, “Go, and sin no more.” If she didn’t repent, she would perish.



Imagine a town in the Old West in which there is no justice. Its citizens are robbed, raped, and murdered. The townspeople meet and decide to bring to town a famous marshal who has the reputation of bringing justice wherever he goes. All the good citizens would rejoice to see the guilty brought to justice.

During the 1990s in the U.S., there were 200,000 murders. Amazingly, half of those murders were unsolved. That means 100,000 murderers were never brought to justice. Therefore, 100,000 people were shot, stabbed, strangled, pushed off buildings, bludgeoned to death, etc., and no one was punished for the crimes. Humanity may be unable to right such terrible injustice, but God isn't. He will ensure that every murderer gets his just dessert. On the Day of Judgment, murderers, as well as rapists, thieves, liars, adulterers, fornicators, etc., will finally be brought to justice.

Judgment Day is the climax of the ages. It is a day that the whole of creation eagerly awaits, an event for which the very ground cries out. It has done so from the blood of Abel to the last injustice of this age. God loves justice—and He will have it:

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the LORD: for he comes, *for he comes to judge the earth*: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth (Psalm 96:11–13, emphasis added).

Don't be concerned that, by referring to the Judgment, you are causing sinners to fear. They have sinned against God and His wrath abides on them. In fact, the Bible calls them "children of wrath." Shouldn't they then fear Him? Look at these words from Isaac Watts:

I never knew but one person in the whole course of my ministry who acknowledged that the first motions of religion in his own heart arose from a sense of the goodness of God, "What shall I render to the Lord, who has dealt so bountifully with me?" But I think all besides who have come within my notice have rather been first awakened to fly from the wrath to come by the passion of fear.



The Day of Judgment is the reason men are commanded to repent (Acts 17:30,31). If we don't preach that God will judge the world in righteousness, we shouldn't be surprised that men and women are passive about responding to the Savior. If we tell them that they need only believe, then neither should we be surprised when the Church fills up with false converts who believe but don't even have enough fear of God to obey.

Therefore, we must remember that it isn't enough to preach the Moral Law. It must be preached in conjunction with future punishment. It has been well said that Law without consequence is nothing but good advice. The world will agree that the Ten Commandments are good advice—stealing, murder, adultery, covetousness, etc., destroy a society. We must instead preach that those who commit adultery, those who lie and steal, etc., will be punished on the Day of Wrath. It is the preaching of future punishment that produces fear, and it is through the fear of the Lord that men depart from sin (Proverbs 16:6). The Bible tells us that “the Law works wrath” (Romans 4:15). Martin Luther stated, “The proper effect of the Law is to lead us out of our tents and tabernacles, that is to say, from the quietness and security wherein we dwell, and from trusting in ourselves, and to bring us before the presence of God, to reveal his wrath to us, and to set us before our sins.”

No man will let go of his darling sins unless he sees a reason to. Hell is a good reason. However, it is difficult for any Christian to preach judgment and the reality of hell without using the Law. Imagine if the police burst into your home, arrested you, and angrily said, “You are going away for a long time!” Such conduct would leave you bewildered and angry. What they have done seems *unreasonable*.

However, imagine if the law burst into your home and instead told you specifically what you had done wrong: “We have discovered 10,000 marijuana plants growing in your back yard. You are going away for a long time!” You would then understand *why* you are in trouble. Knowledge of the law you have transgressed furnishes you with that understanding. It makes judgment *reasonable*.

Hell-fire preaching without the use of the Law to show sinners why God is angry with them will more than likely leave them bewildered and angry—for what they consider unreasonable punishment. A sinner can-



not conceive of the thought that God would send anyone to hell, as long as he is deceived into thinking that God's standard of righteousness is the same as his. R. C. Sproul rightly said, "There's probably no concept in theology more repugnant to modern America than the idea of divine wrath." This is because America has been left in the dark about the spiritual nature of God's Law, and therefore has no understanding of God's absolute and uncompromising holiness.

However, when we use the Law lawfully, it appeals to the "reason" of sinners. Paul *reasoned* with Felix about his sins and the judgment to come, so that the governor "trembled" (Acts 24:25). He suddenly understood that he was a guilty sinner in the sight of a holy God and hell became reasonable. No doubt the "righteousness" Paul spoke of was the righteousness which is of the Law, with the result that the fear of God fell upon the heart of his hearer.

Therefore, never underestimate the power of reasoning with a sinner (using the Law) about the reality of hell. Learn how to give extreme scenarios that stretch him into a moral dilemma. Say, "Imagine if someone raped your mother or sister, then strangled her to death. Do you think God should punish him?" If the person is reasonable, he will say, "Yes, of course. That makes sense." Then ask, "Do you think He should punish thieves?" Then follow with liars, etc. Tell him that God is perfect, holy, just, and righteous, and that His "prison" is a place called "hell."

Always take the sinner back to his personal sins. Remember to speak to his conscience: "You know right from wrong. God gave you a conscience," etc. Some people believe in a temporary hell (purgatory), or in "annihilation" (that the soul ceases to exist after death). The Bible, however, speaks of conscious, eternal punishment. If he thinks that is harsh, tell him that it is. If we think *eternal* punishment is horrific, what should we do about it? Shake our fists at God? When such foolish thoughts enter our minds, we must go to the foot of the cross and meditate on the great love God had for us—that He was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. Then, we must turn any horror into concern, and plead with sinners to flee from the wrath to come.

Charles Spurgeon said, "God [has] appointed a day in which He will judge the world, and we sigh and cry until it shall end the reign of wick-



edness, and give rest to the oppressed. Brethren, we must preach the coming of the Lord, and preach it somewhat more than we have done, *because it is the driving power of the gospel*. Too many have kept back these truths, and thus the bone has been taken out of the arm of the gospel. Its point has been broken; its edge has been blunted. The doctrine of judgment to come is the power by which men are to be aroused. There is another life; the Lord will come a second time; judgment will arrive; the wrath of God will be revealed. *Where this is not preached, I am bold to say the gospel is not preached.*

“It is absolutely necessary to the preaching of the gospel of Christ that men be warned as to what will happen if they continue in their sins. Ho, ho sir surgeon, you are too delicate to tell the man that he is ill! You hope to heal the sick without their knowing it. You therefore flatter them; and what happens? They laugh at you; they dance upon their own graves. At last they die! Your delicacy is cruelty; your flatteries are poisons; *you are a murderer*. Shall we keep men in a fool’s paradise? Shall we lull them into soft slumbers from which they will awake in hell? Are we to become helpers of their damnation by our smooth speeches? In the name of God we will not.”

QUESTIONS

- 1. Why should we not be concerned that speaking of judgment causes sinners to fear?**

- 2. If we don’t preach about the coming judgment, what will result?**



3. **Why is it difficult for Christians to preach about judgment and hell without making reference to the Law?**

4. **What does the Law do to judgment?**

5. **According to R. C. Sproul, what do most people think of God's wrath?**

6. **What does eternal punishment for sin show us about God?**

PREACHER'S PROGRESS

Candice B. Fureal: "Christian, I want to ask you a question."

Christian: "Sure. What is it?"

Candice B. Fureal: "I admit that I have told fibs and white lies in the past. But will God send me to hell for telling one lie?"

Christian: "Are you saying that your sins are 'petty' sins, so you don't think they should take you to hell?"

Candice B. Fureal: "I guess that's what I'm saying."



Christian: “Let’s put it this way. How many lies have you told in your life: one or two, or more?”

Candice B. Fureal: “I think it would be in the ‘more’ category.”

Christian: “So what does that make you?”

Candice B. Fureal: “Not a ‘liar’—the word sounds too harsh.”

Christian: “Candice, you have told many lies, and even if you told one lie, it makes you a liar.”

Candice B. Fureal: “I can’t see that.”

Christian: “If I commit one murder, it makes me a murderer. If I rob one bank, it makes me a bank robber. If I commit adultery once, it makes me an adulterer. It’s the same with lies.”

Candice B. Fureal: “Okay. That makes sense.”

Christian: “Your sins may seem petty to you, but to God they are many and are very serious. If a judge gave a sentence of a \$5 fine, you may conclude that the criminal’s crime was petty. The punishment reflects the crime. However, if you read that a judge has given a criminal five life sentences, you may conclude that the crime was heinous. God’s punishment for sin is everlasting damnation in hell. That shows how our ‘petty’ sins are unspeakably serious in the sight of a holy God.”

Candice B. Fureal: “Okay.”

Christian: “So can you see that you have a multitude of sins, all of which God is aware of, and that you are in danger of being damned forever?”

Candice B. Fureal: “Yes. I can see that now.”

Christian: “Candice, God loved you so much that He became a human being in Jesus Christ to take the punishment for your sins. If you repent and trust in Jesus, because of His death and resurrection, God can now grant you everlasting life.”

Candice B. Fureal: “Can this be for real? What you are saying sounds too good to be true.”



Christian: “If it were the mere word of man, it would be too good to be true. But this is the promise of Almighty God to all who obey Him.”

FEATHERS FOR ARROWS

Years ago, a television advertisement had a deep-voiced commentator ask the sobering question, “What goes through the mind of a driver at the moment of impact in a head-on collision if he’s not wearing a seat belt?” As he spoke, they showed a dummy without a safety belt, reacting in slow motion to a head-on collision. As the dummy moved forward on impact, the steering wheel went right through its skull. Then the commentator somberly continued, “. . . the steering-wheel. You can learn a lot from a dummy. Buckle up!”

How could the censors allow such fear tactics? This advertisement struck trepidation in the hearts of motorists. The reason is clear: they were speaking the truth. It is a fearful thing to be in a head-on collision when you’re not wearing a seat belt.

What you are sharing with people is the gospel truth. The Bible warns, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” It is right that they should fear, because they are in danger of eternal damnation. They are going to collide head-on with God’s Law. Let Judgment Day play out before their eyes in slow motion.

Memory Verse

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

1 JOHN 1:8–10

Last Words

Karl Marx, revolutionary, died in 1883. To his housekeeper, who urged him to tell her his last words so she could write them down for posterity, he answered:

“Go on, get out—last words are for fools who haven’t said enough.”